

Weekly POK News Digest

(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

Volume 5 | Issue 13

24 March - 30 March 2025

POK
permit fees
unemployment
unplanned tourism
Gilgit-Baltistan
Governance Order
new revenue districts
internet connectivity
subsidised wheat
Diamer-Bhasha
protest
CPEC



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Political Developments

GB: undermined by ‘governance’

Dawn, 24 March 2025

The government of Pakistan has promoted Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) as a premier adventure tourism destination, showcasing its breath-taking landscapes and towering peaks. Ironically, GB is constitutionally not part of the country. Liberated by its people in 1947 it opted for Pakistan. Sadly, despite assuming de facto control, Pakistan has held back from according full constitutional status to GB, citing the unresolved implementation of UN resolutions on Kashmir to which GB has been yoked. As a result, GB continues to be governed through presidential decrees, unaccompanied by parliamentary representation.

This fragile arrangement, lacking moral and legal legitimacy, is upheld through a local elected assembly with circumscribed powers which can be unilaterally upended by the prime minister, who remains unaccountable to the region’s people. To prop up this artificial governance structure, national political parties dominate the political landscape through local chapters, essentially controlling the regional leadership. The primary role of these local leaders is to suppress growing discontent against a system that functions as a form of colonial rule, offering only an illusion of self-governance.

Local governments (LG) are manipulated to maintain the status quo, resorting to short-sighted and irresponsible decisions, which lead to an ineffective administrative structure. This governance model has drained resources without delivering meaningful development, thus subjecting the people to compromised healthcare, education, and social services. The result is a bureaucratic white elephant, which is expensive to maintain and ineffective in addressing people’s true needs.

Since the enactment of the 2009 Governance Order, successive political governments have prioritised job creation for political workers over establishing a robust administrative structure accountable to an elected assembly. The easiest way to achieve this has been to carve out new revenue districts, formed irresponsibly leading to bureaucratic expansion. Now numbering 10, the new districts have led to a governance crisis in a region of just 1.8 million. Each district now requires a deputy commissioner, district police officer, session’s judge, and heads of various line departments despite some districts having fewer than 100,000 residents.

In policing, two districts alone have over 10 police stations, while four have fewer than five. The justification for these districts vast geography and a difficult terrain is flawed, as the administrative structure has grown disproportionately compared to local

needs. Alarmingly, ahead of the next local assembly elections, plans are underway to create four more districts to be funded by diverting the development budget and depriving the region of essential projects. The creation of these small districts has had serious consequences: underutilised deputy commissioners assuming municipal functions, thus obstructing the evolution of an effective LG system; unregulated hotel expansion causing pollution, with little enforcement of regulations by a specialised institution; a police force increasingly assuming judicial functions, and intervening in civil disputes beyond its mandate, thus undermining the judicial system; diversion of budgetary resources to sustain a non-productive administrative structure has led to resource constraints, resulting in power shortages and water scarcity which is exacerbated by unplanned tourism; the absence of town planning has resulted in the unchecked expansion of informal settlements, turning pristine valleys into overcrowded slums.

But the most troubling outcome has been the neglect of fundamental issues by the local political leadership. With a few honourable exceptions, most leaders have paid little attention to resolving the constitutional status of the region, leaving it in a state of political limbo. This breeds discontent and risks deepening resentment. People expect their leaders to take an active and serious role in addressing these concerns.

Key unresolved demands include: rehabilitation for Chilas residents affected by water storage for the Diamer-Bhasha dam; completion of hydropower projects stalled due to funding shortages, thus delaying energy supply; the process of granting lease for mineral resources must be made fair and transparent and safeguard local interests; for legal protection of landownership, legislation is required to formally recognise and protect these rights of local communities; GB should be given a fair share in CPEC projects, instead, its fragile environment has been exposed to pollution caused by heavy traffic. The region's leaders must also take up the critical matter of constitutional representation resolutely. Continued denial of representation in parliament and the federal government remains a key factor underpinning the region's neglect and the arbitrary decisions imposed upon it. The creation of four more districts may serve short-term political interests, but the long-term consequences will be disastrous.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1899991/gb-undermined-by-governance>

Lax regulatory measures make GB hotspot for substandard edibles

Dawn, 24 March 2025

The supply of substandard and low-quality edibles to Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) is a source of an increase in cardiovascular and gastrointestinal

diseases in the region, experts said, pointing out lax regulatory measures to ensure the quality of food products transported from other parts of the country. The region has no food industry and its residents depend on other parts of the country for food products. However, it is not sure whether these products are being supplied to the region by licenced companies or counterfeit companies who might be using the logo of licenced companies. Ejaz Ayub, a cardiologist, told *Dawn* the situation in remote areas was deteriorating as shady companies without any inspections were sending food products, cooking oil, biscuits, chips and other edible items to regional markets without any oversight.

Dr Bahadur Shah, president of the GB Young Doctors Association, told *Dawn* that the influx of substandard food items in GB posed risks to the lives of residents. Official says GB has no food authority while other testing facilities are time-intensive. Doctors say products being supplied to mountainous region are causing cancer and heart diseases

He said due to insufficient health facilities, diseases such as cancer and diabetes had the highest ratio in the region. Medical experts told *Dawn* that the ratio of gastrointestinal cancer and heart patients was higher in GB compared to other cities of the country. According to Dr Arif, stroke cases are reported mostly due to the consumption of substandard products

in the region. Dr Waseem Abbas said substandard food items affect the immune system and blamed aged buffalos and boiler chickens being supplied to GB for a spike in such diseases. Dr Ehsan said low-quality food products created nutrition deficiency and also linked it to stunting in children.

It may be noted that the residents of GB also depend on subsidised wheat supplied by the federal government. However, the civil society members and elected members of the GB Assembly have protested against the quality of this wheat, raising questions about its quality. GB assembly member Nawaz Khan Naji had once alleged that expired wheat was being supplied to the region. When contacted, a food department official told *Dawn* that quality assurance guidelines issued by the Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA) were being implemented in GB. He said food items were being checked regularly for their expiry date but lab tests were needed to examine the quality of ingredients used in edible items.

The official said there was only one drug and food testing laboratory in GB's health department but it was charging Rs1300 per sample and the process was time-intensive. He also said the GB food department had no budget to pay for tests of the food samples. It may be noted GB enacted the GB Food Act in 2021, which also recommended a food authority to

ensure the quality of food. However, this authority for oversight of food products has not been established. On the other hand, civil society members have sought an immediate halt to the circulation of harmful food products due to their adverse health risks.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1899898>

GB's Tech Opportunity - 4th Industrial Revolution at 8,000 Feet?

Friday Times, 27 March 2025

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is fundamentally linked to technological advancements. These technological advancements, including artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), big data, blockchain, and other digital innovations, have transformed people's daily lives. While these latest technological innovations can unfortunately contribute to illegal activities such as online scams, deepfake videos, and privacy breaches, their appropriate and correct utilisation through avenues like gig work and freelancing can significantly contribute to the socio-economic uplifting of individuals and nations alike.

Currently, Pakistan's economic condition is characterised by a high unemployment rate that leads to brain drain and mental health issues among the country's youth. Effective interventions in the gig economy could help address this issue by providing virtual access to the global marketplace. Notably, Pakistan ranked fourth in the global freelancing

rankings in 2024. Presently, approximately three million freelancers are working in Pakistan with an average annual earning of Rs 524,393. Economists frequently describe cities as engines of growth due to their superior earning opportunities, leading to significant urban migration. In Pakistan, we observe a similar pattern where individuals from marginalised and underdeveloped regions relocate to urban centres seeking better economic prospects.

Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) represents one of Pakistan's peripheral regions. Despite boasting the highest literacy rate in the country, both the general population and youth of GB frequently migrate to Pakistan's urban centres due to insufficient industrialisation and limited employment opportunities. While the tourism and mining sectors are often considered potential game-changers for GB, realising this potential requires substantial investments and financial resources. Given Pakistan's current economic challenges and global market trends, the gig economy offers a promising solution for the region's highly literate yet unemployed youth. The lack of reliable internet connectivity and the ongoing energy crisis represent the primary obstacles. While global internet speeds are advancing toward 6G and 7G technologies, GB struggles with unstable and limited 3G services.

Recently, RASTA-PIDE, Pakistan's largest research grants project, conducted its fifth conference where a

research paper titled "The Future of Work in the Mountains: Exploring the Freelancing Landscape in Gilgit Baltistan" was presented. This paper highlights the significant potential of the gig economy in G-B. According to the research, the National Freelance Training Program (NFTP) at Karakoram International University (KIU) Gilgit emerged as the most successful program of its kind in Pakistan. The program trained nearly 1,400 youth across GB through six cohorts, achieving a remarkable 58% graduation rate - the highest in Pakistan.

However, several challenges hinder the development of the gig economy in GB. The lack of reliable internet connectivity and the ongoing energy crisis represent the primary obstacles. While global internet speeds are advancing toward 6G and 7G technologies, Gilgit-Baltistan struggles with unstable and limited 3G services. In many areas, internet connectivity remains restricted to EDGE (E) and 2G speeds. Additionally, during winter months, the region experiences power outages lasting 14 to 18 hours daily, severely disrupting internet connectivity which depends entirely on electricity availability.

Annually, the GB government collaborates with local NGOs to launch freelancing training initiatives. Several small tech and freelancing hubs have been established to train the region's youth, yet these operate in isolation. Most offer similar training programs

without coordination, resulting in significant redundancy. The government's role must extend beyond simply establishing tech and freelancing hubs. Two years ago, the GB government introduced tech fellows in primary and middle schools to stimulate student interest in this field. Unfortunately, after the initial two-year period, the contracts of these tech fellows were not renewed, and the initiative has since been completely discontinued.

The Government of Pakistan recently introduced "Uraan Pakistan" as part of its National Economic Transformation Plan. This plan centres around the "5Es" framework for economic development, with "E-Pakistan" representing one of its core elements. For sustainable socio-economic development, enhanced coordination between the federal government and the GB government under this 5Es framework is essential. Given the demonstrated potential of GB's gig economy, ensuring reliable internet infrastructure should become the government's top priority. Several private telecom companies in Pakistan have expressed interest in providing 4G services in GB, an opportunity the government should capitalise on through formal Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to guarantee high-speed, uninterrupted internet services.

The current fragmented freelancing initiatives across public and private organisations in GB require consolidation under independent

regulatory bodies such as a "Gilgit-Baltistan Gig Work Regulator" or "Gilgit-Baltistan Freelancing Management Authority." Such an institution would facilitate effective policy formulation, regulation, and the development of standardised freelancing curricula while enabling proper monitoring and evaluation of initiatives. Additionally, reinstating the school-level tech fellows program alongside technical education initiatives at KIU Gilgit and the University of Baltistan would help equip GB's youth with market-relevant skills.

By empowering our youth - particularly in marginalised regions like GB with digital skills, Pakistan can emerge as a strong global economic power. Through strategic investments in high-speed internet infrastructure, structured training programs, and integrated policymaking, we can transform GB into a freelancing powerhouse that serves as a model for the rest of Pakistan. The time for decisive action is now.

<https://thefridaytimes.com/27-Mar-2025/gb-s-tech-opportunity-4th-industrial-revolution-at-8-000-feet>

GB mountaineering permits delayed due to royalty litigation

Dawn, 26 March 2025

The dispute between the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) tourism department and tour operators over a hike in mountaineering and trekking permit

fees has caused a delay in the issuance of permits to foreign mountaineers and trekkers. Over 200 foreign trekkers and mountaineers through their tour operators have already applied for trekking and mountaineering in GB; however, the tourism department has not issued permits, citing a decision by the GB chief court that suspended the increase in the permit fees.

The tourism department had sanctioned a 300 per cent increase in the mountaineering royalty and trekking fee for foreigners earlier this year. The tour operators challenged the decision in the Chief Court, which subsequently suspended the hike till the next hearing. It also issued notices to the respondents. The court is expected to take up the case today.

Pakistan Association of Tour Operators President Niaz Ahmed told Dawn that so far 200 foreign mountaineers and trekkers have applied for permits, but the GB tourism department has not issued permits to the adventurers at previous rates. According to Mr Ahmed, the court has only suspended the recent increase and has not stopped the department from issuing permits to foreigners for trekking and mountaineering in GB. He said the delay was impacting the tourism industry, as thousands of foreigners were expected to visit the region to climb mountains in the summer. Similarly, the tour operators also appeared concerned, saying not a single expedition visited Pakistan in winter. Mr Ahmed feared that foreign

mountaineers and trekkers would not visit GB this summer due to a delay in the issuance of permits.

Adventure Tours Pakistan CEO Naiknaam Karim told Dawn that his foreign clients had applied for a trekking permit for the Panmah Glacier-Sim Pass expedition, scheduled from March 24 to April 23. The group had secured international travel arrangements and necessary route clearances from the relevant authorities, but the tourism department did not issue a permit upon their arrival in Pakistan. They had no option but to send the foreign trekkers back, Mr Karim rued. He said such decisions affected the tourism industry and this delay further complicated the issue.

He said thousands of climbers and trekkers would cancel their plans in the absence of permits and this would likely cause a huge loss to the GB people, who are mainly affiliated with the tourism sector. He claimed that at an international event in Germany, the officials of the tourism department had assured the international tour operators of issuing permits at previous rates. It may be noted that foreigners have to pay \$500 for trekking in Pakistan, whereas in Nepal, the trekking fee is only \$30. The trekking fees in Pakistan vary by location and altitude, with an average fee of \$500, according to Mr Karim.

After the recent hike, one foreigner will have to pay more than \$4,000 in royalty fees to climb one of the eight

thousanders in GB, while in Nepal royalty fee for such a peak was \$1,800 per person. Mr Abbas said the tourism department could only issue permits at previous rates under the erstwhile Finance Act, which had been revoked by the GB Assembly for the Finance Act 2024. He, however, assured that the department would implement the court order.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1900280/gb-mountaineering-permits-delayed-due-to-royalty-litigation>

‘AJK’ PM celebrates Pakistan Day

The Nation, 24 March 2025

The Prime Minister (PM) of ‘AJK’, Chaudhry Anwaar ul Haq marked Pakistan Day by highlighting the significance of the March 23, 1940, resolution. According to ‘AJK’ PM office, he termed it a comprehensive roadmap for the emergence of a separate homeland for Muslims in the subcontinent. The resolution, presented at the Lahore summit, introduced the concept of a united homeland for Muslims, identifying areas to be included in Pakistan. This vision was finally achieved on August 14, 1947, under Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s leadership. Haq emphasized the sacrifices made during the Pakistan movement and acknowledged the participation of Kashmiri representatives in the Lahore summit. He stressed that Pakistan is incomplete without Kashmir and expressed hope for the realization of

‘Takmeel e Pakistan’ (Completion of Pakistan).

<https://www.nation.com.pk/24-Mar-2025/ajk-pm-celebrates-pakistan-day>

Pakistan rejects India’s claim on Kashmir, demands plebiscite

Dawn, 26 March 2025

The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) of Balochistan police has arrested four suspects who allegedly facilitated the terrorist group involved in hijacking of the Jaffar Express and taking over 400 passenger’s hostage in Bolan district on March 11. Sources in CTD, while confirming the arrests, said that a joint team comprising senior officials from various law enforcement agencies is investigating the attack on the Jaffar Express. These four suspects have been taken into custody for interrogation, the sources said, adding that efforts to identify the attackers are also ongoing. The remains of the militants killed in the attack on the Jaffar Express have been sent to the Forensic Science Agency. The sources said arms and communication devices used by the attackers were seized and sent for forensic analysis. Additionally, the attackers’ fingerprints have been sent to Nadra for identification. The attack on the Jaffar Express resulted in the deaths of 26 passengers and injuries to 40 others. In a retaliatory operation, 33 attackers were killed.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1900378/pakistan-rejects-indias-claim-on-kashmir-demands-plebiscite>

India’s suppression tactics in Kashmir will not deter the freedom struggle: Abdul Hameed Lone

Daily Parliament Times, 27 March 2025

Abdul Hameed Lone, senior leader of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) and Vice Chairman of Friends of Kashmir, has strongly condemned the Modi administration’s intensified crackdown on pro-freedom activists in ‘Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir’ (IIOJK). In a statement, he asserted that India’s attempts to silence the voices of Kashmiris through fear and oppression are doomed to fail. The people of Kashmir have repeatedly demonstrated unwavering resilience in their struggle for self-determination, despite facing severe human rights violations and systematic suppression, Lone claimed.

He claimed that India’s strategies, ranging from the use of excessive force to political manipulation and divide and rule tactics have only fuelled the Kashmiris’ resolve for freedom. Historical movements, such as the mass uprising of 1989, have shown that Kashmiri unity strengthens in the face of oppression. Lone further said that the coercive policies of Indian leaders, including Narendra Modi and Amit Shah, cannot erase Kashmir’s internationally recognized status. He reiterated that despite India’s persistent efforts to quell the Kashmiri people’s aspirations, the significance of their struggle remains unchanged.

He claimed that the narrative of so-called ‘normalcy’ in Kashmir is a falsehood that cannot conceal the ongoing resistance against ‘Indian occupation.’ He urged the international community, particularly the United Nations, to acknowledge the Kashmiris’ legitimate right to self-determination. Lone stressed that a peaceful resolution to the conflict can only be achieved through meaningful dialogue and the recognition of Kashmiris’ fundamental rights—rather than India’s continued attempts to suppress their aspirations through fear and violence.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2025/03/27/indias-suppression-tactics-in-kashmir-will-not-deter-the-freedom-struggle-abdul-hameed-lone/>

Human Trafficking Racket Smuggled Women from Gilgit-Baltistan to Serbia: Ishaq Dar Orders Investigation

Pamir Times, 29 March 2025

A shocking human trafficking scandal has surfaced, exposing a network that smuggled dozens of women from Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) to Serbia under the guise of employment. The racket, allegedly facilitated by Pakistan’s Ambassador to Serbia, Ali Haider Altaf, has prompted Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar to launch an official investigation. According to Pakistani journalist Shamshad Bangash, the trafficking operation was orchestrated by a company named Highreach International, reportedly owned by

Saleha Rajpoot and Sajid Mumtaz. Between March and December 2024, the company ran newspaper advertisements offering jobs in Serbia for ‘female farm workers’ with a monthly salary of €600. The recruitment targeted women between the ages of 25 and 50, requiring no education or prior experience. Each applicant was charged PKR 200,000, raising initial suspicions that were largely ignored.

These women were lured with fake job offers and smuggled out of Pakistan. Once in Serbia, their passports were confiscated, and they were forced into low-paid field labor under inhumane conditions, said investigative journalist Shamshad Bangash, who has been tracking the case for months. Of the 40 women trafficked through this scheme, the majority hailed from GB. The situation escalated when two of them were arrested in Romania, triggering alarm among international human rights organizations.

The scandal has sent shockwaves through Pakistan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Islamabad-based journalist Sabih Ul Hussnain reported that the Foreign Office has constituted a fact-finding committee to investigate the alleged involvement of Ambassador Ali Haider Altaf and other officials in facilitating the trafficking ring. Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has vowed a thorough probe into how a private company, allegedly with diplomatic backing, was able to operate such a

large-scale smuggling network using government influence and diplomatic channels.

Warnings about the trafficking operation had surfaced as early as April 2024. Yaqoob Tai, a journalist from Ghizer, GB, had raised concerns on social media about a non-local woman and a local accomplice conducting suspicious recruitment drives in the region. Tai warned that unemployed women were being lured with false promises of high salaries in Europe, despite no qualification requirements, a red flag for human trafficking. People of Ghizer, especially parents, must not fall for such false promises, he cautioned. While Ghizer police expelled the recruiters, they later attempted to return, signalling the persistence of the operation.

The revelations have sparked outrage, raising critical questions about how a private company, allegedly supported by a serving diplomat, was able to carry out transnational human smuggling with impunity. The role of government officials and diplomatic missions in enabling such criminal networks will be central to the investigation. As Pakistan grapples with the fallout, human rights groups and watchdogs are demanding swift action to bring the perpetrators to justice and protect vulnerable women from falling prey to similar schemes.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2025/03/28/human-trafficking-racket-smuggled-women-from-gilgit-baltistan-to-serbia-ishaq-dar-orders-investigation/>

Economic Developments

Ecneec approves 13 key projects worth Rs1.275trn

Business Recorder, March 26 2025

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) approved 13 development projects worth Rs1,275.714 billion across key sectors, including transport, communications, railways, space technology, and public infrastructure; Projects for economic transformation in GB aimed at poverty alleviation, as well as flood rehabilitation initiatives in Sindh to restore critical infrastructure; Pakistan Railways' procurement of high-capacity wagons and passenger coaches, Pakistan's Optical Remote Sensing Satellite project and several major road projects. Deputy Prime Minister (DPM)/Foreign Minister, Senator Ishaq Dar chaired the Executive Committee of the National ECNEC meeting. Relevant ministers from the provinces, federal secretaries and other high level officials attended the meeting.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40354786/ecneec-approves-13-key-projects-worth-rs1275trn>

Diamer-Bhasha Dam protest enters seventh week

Dawn, 29 March 2025

The sit-in by Diamer-Bhasha Dam affected persons entered its 42nd day on Friday as the Gilgit Baltistan (GB) government and other stakeholders failed to strike a deal with the

protesters. Protesters in Chilas, Diamer's district headquarters, said their 31-point character of demands was not met despite promises. The 'Huqooq Do, Dam Banao' (Ensure the rights, build the dam) protest movement has gained public traction from across GB and is expected to intensify after Eid. Protesters said they would not allow the construction of the dam unless their demands were met. Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and GB Amir Muqam, who is also chairman of the committee constituted by the prime minister to address the grievances of the affectees, suggested that the protesters committee should sit with the government committee to resolve the issues.

The construction work on the periphery road, Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) and other dam construction companies' offices in Chilas have been shut for the last 15 days. Several rounds of negotiations have failed to yield results. Addressing protesters, the head of the protest movement committee Maulana Hazratullah said thousands of protesters continued their protest sit-in near KKH at Chilas despite harsh weather and Ramazan. No progress has been made on the implementation of our charter of demands for the last 40 days. Only committees are being formed and delaying tactics are being used. However, the protesters are committed to calling off the protest only after the fulfilment of their demands, Mr Hazratullah said.

Shabir Ahmed Qureshi, another organiser of the protest, said recently, five religious scholars who were on a visit to Darel Valley to mobilise the public faced a road accident when their vehicle skidded off the road and plunged into a ravine near the Diamer Basha Dam site. He said fortunately, all five religious scholars who are among the organisers of the protest remained unharmed in the incident. Shabir Ahmed Qureshi said the unwanted situation was created by the negligence of both the federal and GB governments to settle the issue. Maulana Aftab said people were committed to stand by their demands and the protest will be intensified after Eid.

The dam protest committee members met various political, religious and civil society organisations to seek their support for massive protests after Eid. The organisers decided to continue their protest sit-in near KKH at Chilas during Eid days. Their charter of demands includes the provision of 80 per cent royalty from the Diamer-Bhasha Dam and 30pc from the Dassu Dam to GB, free electricity generated by the project to the Diamer district and at a discounted rate to the people of GB. It also includes payment of compensation for 18,000 acres acquired for the dam, financial package for the remaining 3,000 families affected by the mega project, commercial and residential plots, education, health, and sewerage

projects, jobs for local at the dam project and regularisation of contingent and daily wage employees.

According to a press release issued on Thursday, an important meeting chaired by Federal Minister Engineer Amir Muqam was held in Islamabad. In the meeting, other members of the committee including Federal Minister for Water Resources Moin Wattoo, Water and Wapda retired Lieutenant General Sajjad Ghani, Secretary Ministry of Kashmir Affairs Gilgit-Baltistan Zafar Hassan, GB Chief Secretary Abrar Ahmed Mirza, officials from planning and development division participated. The participants reviewed the demands of the Diamer-Bhasha Dam affectees in detail.

The meeting was informed that so far Rs151 billion has been issued as compensation for land and houses. The federal minister said that although compensation of Rs151 billion has been given, the agreements of 2010 and 2015, which were signed between the Wapda, GB government and the dam affectees, will be implemented. He said that the legitimate demands of the protesters will be addressed at all costs. The federal minister said that the cadet college, schools and health facilities in Chilas are also among their priorities.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1900953>

From Vernacular Urdu Media

Supporting the Kashmir independence movement is the national duty of every citizen of 'Azad Kashmir.' President of 'Azad Kashmir'

Jammu and Kashmir Times, 30 March 2025

The president of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry stated that it is the national duty of every 'Azad Kashmiri' to support and strengthen the ongoing struggle for the liberation of 'illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IOJK). Speaking at a gathering, Sultan reaffirmed his commitment to the Kashmir Freedom Movement, noting it has been the central focus of his entire political career. He highlighted his efforts to raise global awareness of the Kashmir issue during visits to key countries, including the United States, United Kingdom, France, and Turkey. He also stressed the importance of building national consensus and ensuring a united front by bringing together leaders from all political backgrounds.

He pointed to recent high-profile visits, such as U.S. Congresswoman Ilhan Omar's trip to Muzaffarabad, as evidence of his successful advocacy in spotlighting the Kashmir dispute internationally. According to him, these efforts have increased pressure

on the Indian government, which has formally protested to the U.S. and U.K. governments, signaling a shift in the global attention on the issue.

<https://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/1-5.jpg>

Rally held in Muzaffarabad to express solidarity with Kashmiris and Palestinians

Urdupoint, 31 March 2025

A rally organized by the International Forum for Justice and Human Rights and the Central Seerat Committee took place in Muzaffarabad to show solidarity with ‘oppressed Kashmiris’ and Palestinians. According to Kashmir Media Service, the rally, drawing a large crowd that included citizens, civil society members, and Seerat Committee officials held protests demonstration to show their sympathy with the people of both the ‘occupied’ region. Addressing the participants, Mushtaqul Islam, Vice Chairman of the International Forum for Justice and Human Rights, stated that the people of Kashmir and Palestine have endured decades of oppression and brutality. He urged the international community to speak out for these oppressed nations and take concrete steps to restore their fundamental rights.

Mushtaqul Islam emphasized that the world’s conscience must be awakened to stop the crimes committed by Israeli and ‘Indian occupying forces’ against

defenseless Muslims. He asserted that the sacrifices of Palestinians and Kashmiris would not be in vain and would ultimately bear fruit. He vowed that the struggle for liberation in occupied Jammu and Kashmir would continue until its goals are achieved. Rally attendees chanted pro-Palestine and pro-Kashmir slogans, calling on the international community to play its part in halting the atrocities committed against these groups.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/national-news/live-news-4379347.html>

From Social Media

WAJAHAT ALI @wajahatgilgiti

30 March 2025

They will not back down even an inch from their demands. They will announce the next course of action after Eid. The Huqoq Do Dam Banao Movement has announced.

<https://x.com/wajahatgilgiti/status/1906104788934373548>

JAMIL NAGRI @jamilnagri

26 March 2025

The dispute between the GilgitBaltistan tourism department and tour operators over a hike in mountaineering and trekking permit fees has caused a delay in the issuance of permits to foreign mountaineers and trekkers.

https://x.com/search?q=JAMIL%20NAGRI%20%40jamilnagri&src=typed_query

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Disclaimer

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